



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 22-6008, Version: 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH OF EVANSTON AND PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 13, 2022 SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH OF EVANSTON DAY IN COOK COUNTY

WHEREAS, Second Baptist Church, the first black Baptist church organized in Evanston, Illinois, is celebrating its 140th anniversary in November 2022; and

WHEREAS, Second Baptist was established on November 17, 1882, with twenty charter members in a room over the post office, which was located east of the alley on Davis Street between Chicago and Orrington Avenues. Many were well-respected members of the community, and several owned their own businesses. The organizing pastor was the Reverend S. T. Clanton, a student at the Baptist Union Theological Seminary in Morgan Park, Illinois; and

WHEREAS, this group of former slaves consisted of ten members of the predominantly white First Baptist Church (Nathan and Ellen Branch, Daniel and Mary Garnett, George and Maria Robinson, Andrew and Susan Scott, Richard Day and William Enders) and ten other Village residents. Throughout its history, numerous church members have been trailblazers in business, medicine, education, politics, and entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, in September 1883, the church acquired the former Dempster Street Schoolhouse (at the northeast corner of Hinman Avenue and Dempster Street). The structure was moved to a lot leased from Northwestern University on Benson Avenue, north of Church Street. After a fire destroyed that building in September 1889, the members purchased the former Second Methodist Episcopal Church edifice in North Evanston (on West Railroad Avenue at Lincoln Street) in 1890. A land swap with Northwestern University, facilitated by founding member Nathan Branch, allowed the congregation to buy the Benson lot and move the building there. The church began construction of its current brick building in late 1912. It was dedicated in December 1915 as the congregation commemorated its 33rd anniversary; and

WHEREAS, since its establishment 140 years ago, Second Baptist's 23 pastors have provided stellar leadership. Included among the ministers who have led Second Baptist are Rev. S. T. Clanton, Rev. E. H. Fletcher, Rev. B. P. E. Gayles, Rev. I. A. Thomas, Rev. W. H. Borders, Rev. Charles Nathaniel Hawk Sr., Rev. J. Gentry Horace, Rev. Dr. Hycel B. Taylor, and Rev. Mark A. Dennis Jr. The Second Baptist Church of Evanston is currently led by senior pastor, Rev. Dr. Michael C. R. Nabors. More than 100 ministers have been trained, ordained and sent to serve in venues across the United States and globally. Known for its powerful preaching, excellent music ministry and wide-ranging missions work, a revitalized congregation became even more progressive and community-minded in the 1970s. Since arriving at Second Baptist in 2014, Dr. Nabors has sought to continue leading the church in its historical role as a trumpeter for Christ and as a social justice advocate in Evanston and Metro Chicago; and

WHEREAS, since 1882, Second Baptist Church has shined brightly as a cosmopolitan center, reaching out to a diverse community of people in Evanston, the North Shore and the city of Chicago. As Second Baptist describes itself, "We are proud to be a historic, Christ-centered, relevant people who believe in 'the priesthood of all believers.' Leadership has been a historical hallmark of our church." Second Baptist deeply believes in the critical merging of church and community, faith and knowledge, ministry and mission, worship and service, preaching-teaching in our sanctuary, and empowering in our neighborhoods. Second Baptist also believes in faith, freedom, and fellowship as benchmarks of their commitment to God and community; and

WHEREAS, their beliefs are firmly rooted in ministry. Second Baptist Church has long been the site of a Shelter

Ministry and Tuesday Soup Kitchen that regularly serves 50+ individuals experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, and other challenges. New ministries grew with the giftedness of many members. Women were ordained for ministry and the diaconate for the first time. Their ministries now include Children, Youth and Teens; Family; Christian Education; Christian Mission; Worship and Theater Arts; Health & Wellness; and Office of the Pastor; and

WHEREAS, this ministry is further reflected in Dr. Nabors' role as a member of the Steering Committee for Evanston Reparations, the first municipal reparations program in the United States, allocating 10 million dollars to Black Evanstonians to repair historical damages due to racism. Second Baptist Church has also become a leading faith center in America by facilitating Race Talk Solidarity Circles in local communities; and

WHEREAS, words can only meagerly describe the centrality of Second Baptist to the civic and spiritual life of Evanston and the north shore.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County, honors the Second Baptist Church of Evanston, and herewith proclaims November 13, 2022 Second Baptist Church of Evanston Day in Cook County, Illinois; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of the same be tendered to the Second Baptist Church of Evanston.